

The Whitening Wars: Beauty vs Dentist

Whilst more people than ever quest to have a white smile, the method chosen to whiten teeth differs widely with varying results. Having a whiter smile is a beauty asset and for many it is essential to have a beautiful smile, not only for self-confidence but also in order to improve their appearance. Some patients tell me that they are seeking a personal rebrand and part of the rebranding is a white smile. They do this for better job promotion prospects and to achieve more success at work and in their personal lives.

The research has clearly shown that the best method for tooth whitening is using 10% carbamide peroxide in the bleaching trays and overnight use. It results in a longer lasting whiter smile and has many health benefits, namely the improvement in gingival health, reduction of plaque accumulation, improvement in oral hygiene and even reduction in root caries in the elderly patients.

However what is of great concern to me is the vociferous promotion of tooth whitening by the non-dentists. They use excellent marketing techniques and have excellent websites with personal proof stories of others who have whitened their teeth using beauty therapist whitening treatments. They feel they are entitled to undertake tooth whitening and

many of their statements on their websites may not be entirely true, such as because tooth whitening is a cosmetic procedure they can undertake cosmetic treatments.

I have received aggressive emails from some of the associations of cosmetic whiteners, non-dentists who promote whitening treatments to the public. The main issue is **patient safety**. Patients should be protected from harm and from the damage that some non-dental whiteners are doing. The new legislation was introduced to protect the public and to prevent harm. The issues are that not only are the beauty therapists undertaking illegal dental procedures, using unsafe products which have not been researched, they are also using products such as sodium perborate which have been banned by the Scientific Committee in Europe and the CED European Confederation of Dentists as being unsafe. Other products which are being used are bicarbonate, chlorine dioxide and even higher strengths of hydrogen peroxide. Some are using dental products to undertake whitening procedures. The issue is widespread.

I welcome the formation of the Tooth Whitening Action Group (TWAG) in order to address these issues. It is a group which includes all dental organisations that are



involved in tooth whitening that can help to tackle this problem from many angles. With this unified approach, successful outcomes can be achieved to protect the public and help them have safe whitening treatments that are predictable, effective and long lasting.

This month we have an excellent series of articles including the results of the Aesthetic Dentistry Awards 2013 and the winners in each of the categories. Also, don't forget to book for the Dentistry Live on 7-8 June! I hope to see you there.

Best wishes,

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Linda Greenwall will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming one-day conference 'Aesthetic Dentistry UK', to be held at the stunning Church House venue in Westminster, London, on 13 September 2013. This special event offers delegates the chance to learn from the very best in aesthetic dentistry whilst earning seven hours of verifiable CPD. For further details and information on how to book, please turn to page 18.

